



Timeline	
2000BC	Farming villages begin to form
1000BC	Maya begin to form larger settlements like Copan
700BC	Mayan writing starts to develop
400BC	First Mayan calendars are carved into stone
100BC	The first pyramids are built
AD 900—1100	Ancient city-based societies of the Maya disappear
1839 AD	John Stephens and Frederick Catherwood re-discover ancient Maya cities.

Key Facts
Maya society built magnificent ceremonial cities in the jungles of Central America – places where ordinary people who were mostly farmers, visited for special religious or seasonal ceremonies and rituals.
Maya civilization consisted of city states that traded with each other (mostly, through farming) and often fought each other
Among their achievements was an awareness and understanding of the movement of the constellations, enabling them to grow crops efficiently through understanding the pattern of the seasons.
People do not know why the ancient Maya abandoned their jungle cities—but it is likely to be due to a number of different factors (overpopulation, warfare, drought, deforestation, soil erosion, the water cycle)
Today there are eight million Maya people living in five countries of Central America.
Key Quotations
Here were the remains of a cultivated, polished, and peculiar people, who had passed through all the stages of the rise and fall of nations; reached their golden age, and perished entirely unknown. <i>(from the memoirs of John Stephens and Fredeick Catherwood)</i>

Vocabulary Dozen	
Abandonment	The action or fact of abandoning or being abandoned.
Ceremonial	Relating to or used for formal religious or public events
Climate	The average weather in a given area over a longer period of time.
Codices	A volume, in book form, of manuscripts of an ancient text.
Constellations	A group of stars forming a recognizable pattern that is traditionally named after its apparent form or identified with a mythological figure.
Culture	The ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society.
Hieroglyphs	Means 'sacred carving' - a type of ancient writing that uses pictures instead of letters.
Plantation	A large area where crops are grown and harvested.
Region	A broad geographical area.
Ritual	A ceremony or series of acts that is always performed in the same way.
Sink hole	Holes in the ground that form when dirt and rocks wash away and cannot support the surface soil, or when the tops of underground caves collapse.
Summer Solstice	Also known as midsummer, occurs when one of the Earth's poles has its maximum tilt towards the Sun.

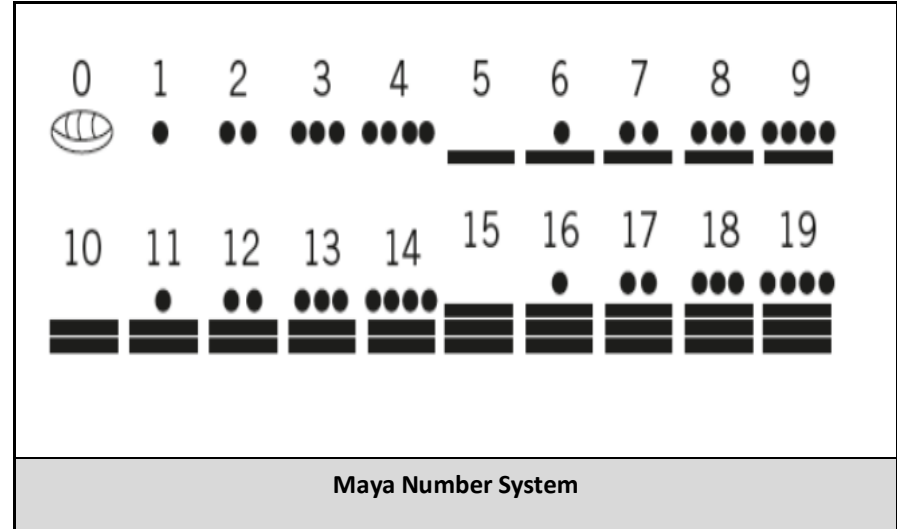
Home Historian

The vast majority of people then were farmers working small farms on the outskirts of the cities. On hillsides, where the slope of the land was steep, the Maya carried out a type of farming using terraces. **As a piece of homework research**, can you produce a labelled diagram that shows the main features of terraced farming and explains why this type of farming prevents the rain eroding or washing away the soil.

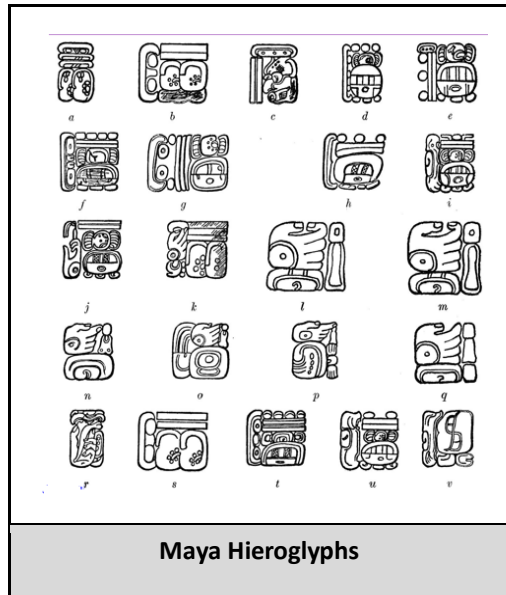




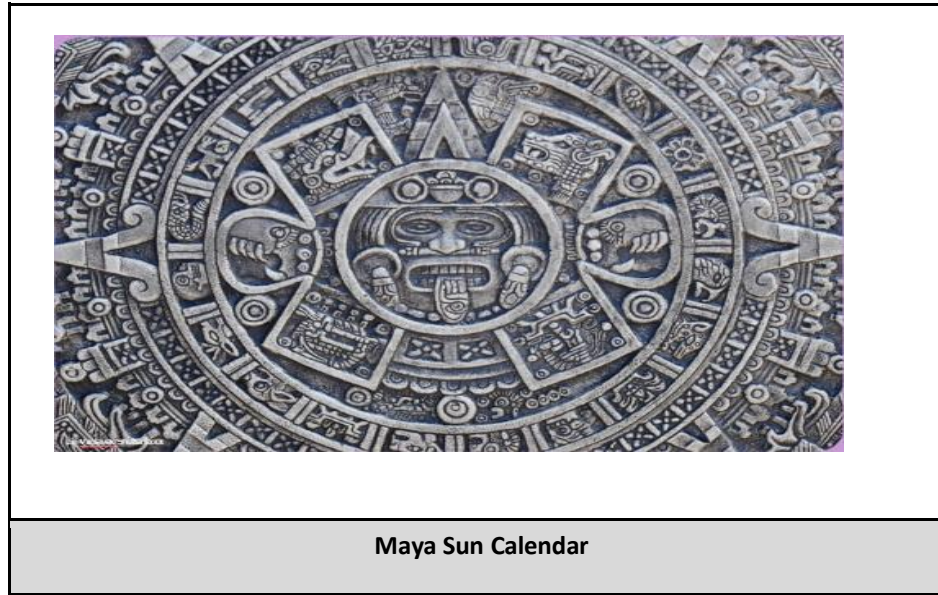
Location map of Maya



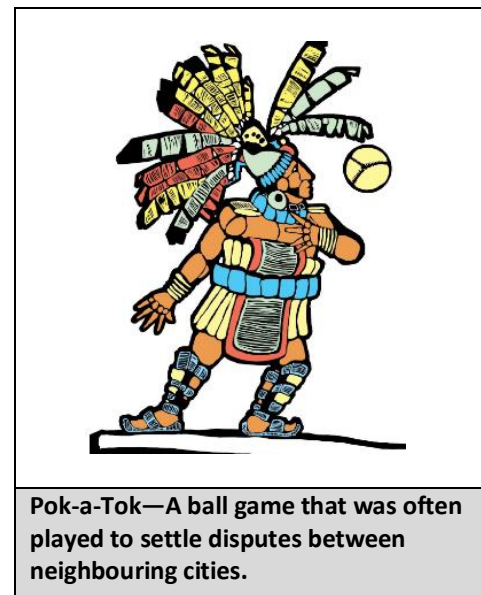
Maya Number System



Maya Hieroglyphs



Maya Sun Calendar



Pok-a-Tok—A ball game that was often played to settle disputes between neighbouring cities.